THE FALL OF PUBLIC SPIRIT.

A

DRAMATIC SATIRE,

In TWO ACTS.

LONDON:

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OLD TIME.

ANCIENT COURAGE, *a noble warlike Figure.*

PUBLIC SPIRIT, *a noble and generous Patriot.*

CONTENT, *a Cottager.*

HONESTY, *Servant to Content.*

AVARICE, *a ſordid Miniſter.*

SUBTILTY, *a ſly Politician.*

COWARDICE, *a puſillanimous Chief.*

EFFEMINACY, *a modern Fop, Minion to a Man of Quality.*

Ruffians, Mob, &c.

WOMEN.

PRIDE, *a Lady of Fortune.*

VANITY, *Siſter to Pride.*

PRUDENCE, *&c. the Wife of Content.*

THE FALL OF PUBLIC SPIRIT.

ACT I.

SCENE England.

Enter Old Time, *introducing an ancient warlike Figure.*

Old Time.

BLESS me how every Thing is changed on this Iſland! 'tis but the other Day, for alas when I look back what is five or ſix hundred Years, to the immenſe Number I have ſeen, who

have exiſted longer than my Memory can well retain?—I ſay 'tis but therefore as the other Day when this Land was the moſt flouriſhing and glorious of all the Nations in the World. Good Heaven, what a *Pigmy Race* of Mortals dance before my Eyes! certainly theſe can never be *Britons!*—Perhaps my Eyes, which are none of the beſt, fail me in this Reſpect, for they appear to me as egregious in Compariſon to what they were, as the fantaſtical Ideas which Ignorance and Superſtition entertain of the feign'd Exiſtences of Fairies and Goblins.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

Certainly we are got into the wrong Country, for I do not remember, when I reſided in *Britiſh Land*, that the Inhabitants were in the leaſt like thoſe which paſs by us.—Hearkee, Goodman *Pigmy*.

[*To Effeminacy, as it trips along in the Character of a modern Fop, who ſhrinks at the Figure of Ancient Courage.*

EFFEMINACY.

Ah! Monſter, (what the Duce have we got here?) monſtrous Creature! I deſire thee to deſiſt from thy vile Intention.—Believe me,

me, *Old Rufus*, I am Meat for his Grace, curſe me!—

ANCIENT COURAGE.

What vile Intention, Eel-ſkin? I aſk thee whether this be a Fairy Land: Anſwer me quickly, or I'll blow thee to the Moon.

EFFEMINACY.

O Lord!—To the Moon! Gummi, what a Breath muſt he have? it muſt be ſtronger than the North Winds!—[*He looks very much troubled.*] (Perhaps my ſweet Behaviour, and the little Arts I practiſe to pleaſe *his Grace*, may gain his Favour.) Indeed, Sir, if you would condeſcend to indulge yourſelf in the little amorous Pleaſures of the Times, I can entertain you to your Satisfaction I vow and declare.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

What can the little Animal mean, I wonder?—I aſk thee what Place this is, and what are the Inhabitants? I want none of thy Entertainment.

EFFEMINACY.

Why, Sir, the Name of this Country is *Britain*; but that is the old Name: 'tis now

more politely called *England*; 'tis a rude Affront to a fine Gentleman to call him a *Briton*, for they were a very rude Set of *Monſters*, according to the Hiſtory of thoſe old-faſhioned Times.

OLD TIME.

Didſt ever hear ſuch an Indignity? Prithee aſk him what Countryman he is, whether he is of this Iſland; for I really do not remember any ſuch Creature in this Climate, I aſſure you.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

Art thou a *Briton*, or a what call ye the new Name?

EFFEMINACY.

Yes, I am an *Engliſhman*.—I deſpiſe the Name of a *Briton*, becauſe it is out of Date.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

You may be *Engliſh*, but you can never be an *Engliſhman* or any Man. What are thy Employments here?

EFFEMINACY.

That Sir's a Secret, though 'tis pretty well known too; for *his Grace* always takes me with

with him, and is to be ſure mighty fond of me in public.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

What then, you are in ſome favourable Employ under *his Grace?*

EFFEMINACY.

Sometimes, Sir, when his *Lordſhip* pleaſes to indulge his innocent Pleaſures; but fie upon you, you make me bluſh I vow to Gad.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

What Reaſon have you to bluſh at an Employ of which you think honourable, and which you are pleaſed to ſay is countenanced and approved of by a Nobleman?

EFFEMINACY.

Why, to be ſure, there are ſome ſcrupulous People who might perhaps think ill of ſuch an Employment, but they are moſtly of the vulgar Sort, Perſons of no Conſequence or Politeneſs.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

Oh, never mind the Aſperſions of the Vulgar; let me know thy Occupation, for as yet I cannot gueſs your Meaning.

EFFEMINACY.

Why, Sir, I was a Foot-boy to a Man of conſiderable Quality here in *England*; but he having always an Antipathy to his Lady (whom he married to increaſe his Fortune) they agreed to part; and ſome Time afterwards *his Grace* was pleaſed to confer more than ordinary Favours on me;—my Livery was taken off, and I was admitted to the Careſſes of *his Grace* in the Room of his Lady, who is now gone to *Bath* with an *Iriſhman* that uſed to look after *his Grace's* Horſes.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

O then I find you are his *Minion*, an *Incubus* to *his Grace*.

EFFEMINACY.

Whatever you pleaſe to call me, that is any Ways connected with good Quality and Politeneſs.

ANCIENT

ANCIENT COURAGE.

Why then I call thee an unnnatural Exiſtence, which having no Reſpect to the Order of Nature, lives in the continual Inverſion of her Laws—Art not thou aſhamed of thy filthy Crimes?—Crimes which even the vileſt Brutes deſpiſe, and ſcorn to be guilty of.

EFFEMINACY.

Lord, Sir, 'tis ſo common Now-a-days, that even ſome of our C—y uſe it by Way of innocent Relax from their Studies. 'Tis looked upon as faſhionable to have a Favourite.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

O ſhocking and deteſtable!—get from my Sight, thou more than Monſter; 'twere an Indignity for my Sword to touch thee, or I would cut thy inſignificant Carcaſe into a thouſand Pieces, and ſend thee to *his Grace* as a new Banquet for his unnatural Appetite.

EFFEMINACY.

Ay, that I will; for indeed I do not like your Looks, curſe me if I do.

[*Exit Effeminacy.*

ANCIENT COURAGE.

Oh *Time*, didſt thou ever ſee ſuch a vile Reptile?—Believe me, I could not think the Air of this Iſland would ſuffer ſo impure a Creature to exiſt.—Alas, what are *Britons* reduced to?—Are ſuch Wretches as theſe countenanced by Perſons of Rank and Quality?—Oh Dignity and Eminence, where are thy Virtues! Thoſe Virtues that once illuſtrated the Character of Nobility, and ſhone with ſuperior Effulgence on the admiring Crowd, are, like the ineffectual Dazzle of a Meteor, vaniſhed into a foul and noxious Vapour, that offends us more with its unwholſome Stench, than ever it pleaſed us with its former Glory.——

SCENE

SCENE II.

Enter PUBLIC SPIRIT.

OLD TIME.

But methinks here is one whoſe venerable Aſpect beſpeaks a noble and exalted Mind.—He ſeems intent on ſome intereſting and ſublime Purpoſe: Perhaps he is a Stranger in this Country; for I have ſeen none like him ſince I ſet Foot upon the Iſland.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

There is a becoming Dignity in his Mein that bids me like him.—Ha! 'tis my old Friend *Public Spirit*. I'll accoſt him—*(To Public Spirit.)* Thy Hand, brave Worthy.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

With all my Heart;—who ſhould have thought to meet ſo old a Friend?—Once the Protector of my dear lov'd Country, thou fought and braved the Hardſhips of

the Field;—but now what doſt thou here? This is no Place for Courage, Honeſty or Wiſdom; every Thing is inverted: Cowardice has more Friends than Valour; Knavery more Riches than Honeſty; and Folly more Eſteem than Wiſdom.—Believe me, I was going to ſeek Protection in a foreign Land. They have ſtopt their Ears at my Advice, ſhut me from their Councils.—They have indeed, O barbarous Monſters, inſulted me with the Offer of a Bribe.—I could not bear the Indignity, and daſh'd it in the Teeth of him who offered it.—Immediately they all cried out a Traitor, and with rude bellowing Throats delivered me to the Multitude, who having more Compaſſion than their Maſters, bade me get off with all the Speed I could. O my poor Country! Fire and Sword, the Meſſengers of Fate, muſt extricate thy Vices ſoon or late.

Ancient Courage.

Be of good Cheer, 'tis the wiſe Man's Philoſophy to make a Friend of Calamity; and

and even a Friendſhip of this Sort is better and more ſteady than that of a fickle and ungrateful People. — Keep with me, my Sword ſhall protect thee from the Inſolence of Power.

SCENE III.

Enter Treachery, Subtilty, Cowardice, &c. ſeeking for Public Spirit, in order to maſſacre him.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

Ha!—there! there are the Villains that ſeek my Life; let us retire to ſome ſweet Aſylum, where we may be leſs expoſed to their mercileſs Cruelty. [*Aſide.*

[*Here they retire behind a Building, with great Attention to what the others ſay.*]

TREACHERY.

I cannot think where he is fled to;—ſurely no Creature that values his own Safety will dare harbour him. Should we find him,

his Buſineſs muſt be done ſecretly, for the Mob love him to Adoration.

SUBTILTY.

Let me alone, I'll find him I warrant you; he is protected by the Citizens, who, becauſe he tells 'em a Tale about their Rights and Liberties, carry their extravagant Eſteem for him to ſo great a Height, that they, if poſſible, will endeavour to ſecure him from our Vengeance.

COWARDICE.

If your Cunning can ſcent him out, our Brother *Treachery* here ſhall deceive him with fair Speeches till a proper Opportunity; and then I'll give him a friendly Stab in the dark.

TREACHERY and SUBTILTY.

Agreed; it ſhall be ſo.

[*Ancient Courage ruſhing forwards, ſtrikes at 'em with his Faulchion, at which they all run off.*]

Ha!

Ha! Villains! Traitors! but it ſhall not—See how the Blood-hounds drive away from Oppoſition. There is ſomething ſo divine in the Sword of Juſtice, that even the moſt perfect Villainy trembles at its Brightneſs.—How then would it howl at the Sharpneſs of its Blade?

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

Let us go hence to ſome humble Village, where we may remain unſuſpected.—Perhaps our Situation may conceal us from the murderous Intention of theſe inhuman Villains.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

I will not leave you; therefore you may depend on my good old Blade:—A truſty Metal that never yet was tarniſhed but with honourable Blood.—Come on my Friend,—ſome Cottage ſhall repoſe us, where lulled by Silence, ever-gentle Sleep ſhall animate our Hearts with better Proſpects.

SCENE

SCENE *changes.*

A Dreſſing Room.

Enter PRIDE *and* VANITY *in the Characters of modern Ladies of Quality.*

PRIDE.

Well, for my Part, I cannot put up with this Inſult,—to have the Wife of a City Alderman ſpoke well of in my Company.—Not that I envy her for her Virtues, poor old faſhion Trumpery!—but that her Dreſs ſhould render her more conſpicuous than mine.—I'll have a thouſand Mantua-makers, but I'll be as well ſpoken of as her.—Fetch me a Score of Tire-women,—I warrant you I'll make the Brazen-Face aſhamed of herſelf at the next Aſſembly.—And here, *William*, run to Mr. *Trippet* the Mercer, and order him to come to me with ſome of the richeſt and neweſt faſhioned Silks in his Shop.—And hearkee,—call upon Mrs. *Finickle*

nickle for a Vial of *Eau de Luce*.—Oh! I had forgot; tell Miſs *Dizle* the Milliner not to fail me with the new Head-lace.

VANITY.

Lord! Siſter, I cannot ſee what Reaſon you have to be ſo out of Humour at Lady *Humdrum*'s good Character, in relation to her Dreſs eſpecially; for you know her Youth entitles her to that.—You might very well lay ſome Part of your Gaiety aſide with a ſafe Conſcience: For you know, Siſter, you've been on the wrong Side of forty theſe three Years.—I think I have the moſt Right to grumble, who have Youth and Beauty on my Side: And I can aſſure Mrs. *Humdrum* that the Men are but very indifferent Judges of our Sex, or I ſhou'd have bore away the Applauſe.—Indeed, Siſter, you muſt allow that, though your conſummate Pride won't let you.

PRIDE.

'Tis your Vanity to think ſo;—but I think, Miſs, if you had theſe very great Accompliſhments you ſpeak of, your Fortune would not have laid ſo long mouldering in my Uncle's

cle's Hands.—Pray, Siſter, d'ye remember what the Colonel ſaid of you?—You and your Beauty—

VANITY.

Ah! a poor taſteleſs inſipid Wretch;—tho' I believe I might have had more of his good Opinion if it had not been for you;—but I am greatly obliged to you indeed.—Pray, Siſter, do you remember what a certain Lord ſaid of you t'other Night at the Opera?

PRIDE.

No, Creature, I don't.

VANITY.

Why then, my dear Siſter, I'll tell you, if you won't put yourſelf in a Pett.—His Lordſhip ſaid, that notwithſtanding all your Dreſs and artful Pride, old Age would peep out and betray you.

PRIDE.

Curſe his Lordſhip!—I don't mind what he ſays; he's no Lover of our Sex.—He beſtows all his Civilities upon his Valet.

VANITY.

VANITY.

Ay, Siſter; but you'd be glad if he was of a contrary Opinion;—without you cou'd change yourſelf into the Perſon of his Minion.

PRIDE.

O inſufferable!—what d'ye think I would ſubmit, if it was poſſible, to ſuch filthy Uſage?

VANITY.

Indeed, Siſter, I believe if you carried the ſame Inclinations about you that you once did,—be of what Sex you wou'd,—his Lordſhip might do any Thing with you.

PRIDE.

Nothing but this could have mortified me ſo. [*Aſide.*] To be ſo notoriouſly oppoſite to the Intereſt of my Sex.—But I'll be reveng'd I warrant;—I'll blow your Intrigue with the Life-Guardman, that I will: The whole Town ſhall know it;—and Mrs. *Minx*

there, that lies-in privately,—your Companion; I'll take Care of her Reputation I warrant ye.

VANITY.

Oh Lord! Sister! how many private Lyings-in have you had since you was seventeen?—But now you are old and past it.—Pray, Madam, how does your eldest Son?—Master *Billy*, that every Body says is so much like the Marquess?—Does he come on well in his Learning? I warrant he's a fine Scholar?—And pray, Sister, how does my little Niece? Does she remain at Boarding-School yet?—Ha, ha, ha!—Ah Sister! Sister! don't pretend to censure my Conduct;—for to let you into the Secret, there are half a Dozen to my Knowledge that make bold to call you Mamma;—besides Accidents and Miscarriages too tedious to mention;—and so, Sister, your Servant. I leave you by yourself to digest what I have said.

[*Exit Vanity.*

PRIDE.

PRIDE.

Oh! I could tear myſelf to Pieces;—I'll never bear it;—who cou'd have thought ſhe knew what ſhe does?—But I'll be reveng'd on her. [*Exit in a Paſſion.*

SCENE *draws and diſcovers* AVARICE *in the Character of a P—e M——r in a ſtudious Poſture.*

AVARICE.

I have wreckt my Brain as yet to no Purpoſe:—What the Devil have I got ſince I have been P—e M——r? Nothing worth ſpeaking of:—What ſignifies being in a Place without Profit?—All my Schemes have not as yet brought me in above one hundred thouſand Pounds; a ſmall Sum,—a Trifle indeed.—But the Nation ſhall make up for this Defect.—If I could but think of ſomething that wou'd bring in about five or

ſix hundred thouſand, I might ſecure myſelf pretty well for one while.—But the Rabble make a great Stir about their Taxes and Oppreſſions, as they call it.—This Liberty and Property is a deal of Money every Year out of a P—e M——s Pocket; and ſo conſidering their Obſtinacy, we cook Matters pretty well;—tho' I think they ſhould be good-natured enough, not to deny us a Trifle more, provided we cou'd do the Thing neatly.

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT.

A Gentleman, in Diſguiſe, deſires to be introduced to your Honour.

AVARICE.

In Diſguiſe ſay you?—Let him be ſhew'd up. [*Exit* Servant.

Oh! this is my old Friend *Subtilty*, the beſt in the World for a Politic Scheme.--Ha! my Friend, you could not have come at a better Time.

Time.—I have been labouring for a new Scheme, to bring in a little Money, but in vain.

SUBTILTY.

I have one in my Brain that will do I believe.

AVARICE.

What is't? What is't? Will it bring in a Million a Year!

SUBTILTY.

Pſhaw,—why you have no Conſcience in the World.—A Million a Year!—Though I don't know but it may.

AVARICE.

Ay indeed!—Come, out with it, out with it; we'll bring in a Bill for it, and carry it I warrant you.

SUBTILTY.

Why, Sir, 'tis this, that every Man or Woman, throughout the Nation, who enjoys

joys the Benefit of their Health, for the Space of one Year, ſhall for every Month after, be liable to the Tax of five Shillings or more, (if you think proper) as a Replication for ſo great a Bleſſing,—and ſo on in Proportion for their Children.

AVARICE.

O Bravo! Bravo!—a good Scheme,— it ſhall be brought into the Houſe.

SUBTILTY.

But I have another,—I think as good as the former,—which is this, That every Man who buries his Wife, ſhall ever after pay ſo much *per* Year, for the Happineſs of being rid of a Plague.

AVARICE.

That's Good,—that's Good.—Now for another, and we're made for ever!

SUBTILTY.

Have at you then.—That every Man who has a Child born, ſhall, after the Space of one

one Year, pay one Shilling *per* Month, for the extraordinary Comfort of having a Child, and upon the Death of a Child he ſhall be liable to the Payment of five Shillings *per* Year, in Lieu of the Expence he would conſequently have been at, had it lived.

AVARICE.

Why theſe Schemes, my Lad, are *Mexico's* and *Peru's* for us.—If we carry our Point we're made for ever.—

SUBTILTY.

Never fear that:—If we can but gain over ſome of the Stiff-necked Commoners, we have no Occaſion to be the leaſt in doubt of it; eſpecially ſince we have drove that *Villain*, PUBLIC SPIRIT, from amongſt us.

AVARICE.

Ah! he was a damnable Obſtruction to all our Deſigns.—Now we may do what we pleaſe with the People.—But is he quite ſecured?

SUBTILTY.

SUBTILTY.

No; but he's fled, and therefore we have now an Opportunity of declaring him a Traitor to the Public.—

AVARICE.

That ſhould be done quickly, leſt he make his Tale good with the Multitude: Let him be publickly proclaimed a Traitor, in every Town by a Herald, with a Reward to apprehend him.

SUBTILTY.

I'll give Orders for it immediately. In the mean while I'd have you go to three or four of our Intereſt, and hear their Opinion in relation to the new Schemes.—Adieu.

AVARICE.

I'll to them directly.—Farewell.

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II.

SCENE, *an open Place in a populous City.*

Enter a Herald, reading a Proclamation to the Crowd, who ſurround with great Attention.

Dear and loving Countrymen,

THE following Proclamation I am compelled to adverti ſe to you, in Subſtance as committed to me, by the Lords and Governors of the preſent Eſtabliſhment. That whereas there is a notorious Traitor, known by the Name of *Pub-*

lic Spirit, who has oppoſed the moſt ſalutary Means for preſerving the Welfare of theſe Realms: I am hereby ordered to proclaim the ſaid *Public Spirit*, to be a Villain and a Traitor to the preſent Government; In order therefore to excite ſo laudable an Undertaking, their Lordſhips do hereby promiſe the Sum of one thouſand Pound to any, he or they, who ſhall bring him alive, that he may undergo the juſt Fate of a Traitor.

God ſave the KING.

One of the Mob.

Ha! have they ſmoak'd him at laſt? who wou'd have ſuſpected him?

Second Person.

Ay, Neighbour, we don't know who's who, till they're found out. But you may plainly ſee he's a Traitor, or their Lordſhips, who to be ſure are all honourable Men, would never have publiſhed him at this Rate.

First Person.

No, No, that you may be ſure of.

Second

Second PERSON.

I wiſh he was here, I'd have a Stroke at him, that I wou'd.

Firſt PERSON.

And ſo wou'd I—for conſider the Reward, One Thouſand Pound!—Lord, there's Money!—beſides the Service we ſhould do our Country, in comprehending a Traterer.

Second PERSON.

How my Fingers itches at the old Rogue!

Firſt PERSON.

Did'ſt ever ſee him?

Second PERSON.

See him! ay, many a Time.—I always thought he look'd like what I find he is.

Firſt PERSON.

Now the worſt on't is, if I was to ſee him I ſhoud'nt know him.

Second PERSON.

You and I'll go and ſeek him.—I'll lay any Wager we ſhall find the Scoundrel.—Come along, Neighbour;—we'll find him if he's above Ground.

Firſt PERSON.

Ay, Ay, that we will;—we'll go this Way. [*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE *changes.*

Diſcovers a rural Proſpect of a pleaſant Cottage, &c.

Enter ANCIENT COURAGE *and* PUBLIC SPIRIT.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

I'll ſet forward for the Court, for I think I may leave you in the Care of the good old Cottager and his Mate, with Safety.—Perhaps the Goodneſs you have always ſhewn for the Public Welfare, may have excited

excited ſome of the Virtuous Few to reinſtate you.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

Indeed I fear it;—but fail not to inform me of the State of Affairs, as ſoon as poſſible; for even yet my Country's Welfare is dearer to me than every other Happineſs.—Fare thee well, and may you return with the good News of their Conviction, how much I love my Country.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

Farewell.

[*Exeunt* Ancient Courage *and* Public Spirit.

SCENE,

SCENE, *the Inhabitants of the Cottage.*

Enter CONTENT *and* PRUDENCE.

CONTENT.

There be ſtrange Doings at Court, *Prudence*, by what I can learn of theſe Gentlefolk.

PRUDENCE.

Ay marry is there,—and belike ſome of the Great-folk are very great Rogues,—or at leaſt 'twill be found ſo.

CONTENT.

Ay, Ay, one wou'd not think it; but they ſay there's more Wickedneſs and Roguery, going forward among the Great Ones, than there is among ſuch poor People as us.—

PRUDENCE.

PRUDENCE.

And yet one wou'd wonder at that, for what can be the Reaſon of their being Rogues?

CONTENT.

Why you muſt know theſe great Folks think they cannot be Rich enough, and ſo they wou'd ſell one another for Money, to ſupport their Extravagance:—though they do not deal in one another, ſo much as they do for the poorer ſort.

PRUDENCE.

What then, is it the Want of Money that induces them to be ſo?

CONTENT.

Ay, in truth is it.—Why ſome of the fine Folks can't pay their Servants.—Nay, ſome on 'em borrow Money of their Servants, as I have heard the Squire's Foot-

man

man ſay.—He lived among the Courtiers at one Time.

PRUDENCE.

Theſe Things be very ſtrange.

SCENE *changes to a Wood.*

Enter Three RUFFIANS.

First RUFFIAN.

Are you ſure his L——p ſaid he was in this part of the Country?

Second RUFFIAN.

Why ay, I tell thee:—His L——p ſaid he ſuppoſed he had taken Refuge in ſome Cottage hereabouts; nay, he ſaid he was poſitively aſſured of it.

Third

Third RUFFIAN.

Come then, we'll beat our Way thro' this Wood, and make Head to the firſt Houſe we get ſight of.

SCENE *a Grove, at ſome little Diſtance from the Cottage; diſcovers* PUBLIC SPIRIT, *reading the Lives of the* BRITISH WORTHIES.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

Ay, theſe indeed were *Britons!*—Men who wou'd ſacrifice their Lives and Properties for the Welfare of their Country,—without the Fear of being called Traitors, and Enemies to their King.—Happy Times! when a Man might dare to be honeſt without incurring the Odium of

a People. O ungrateful Nation! where are thy Virtues fled to? Wou'd Fortune but guide me to that happy Clime that inherits thy ancient Glory; I might then renew my Hopes of Comfort:—But now, alas! no ſingle Ray gives Pleaſure to my Heart; a ſudden Coldneſs chills in all my Veins;—and ſomething tells my Heart my Fate is near.—

Re-enter RUFFIANS.

First RUFFIAN.

Ay, this is He!——Down with him; ſtrike him down.

Second RUFFIAN.

No, do not kill him;—if you do, we ſhall loſe the Reward.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

Thanks, goodly *Ruffian*;—I love thy Mercy well; there's Merit in thy Villainy.

First RUFFIAN.

Bind him then;—perhaps he may give us the ſlip.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

No, my Friends, I'll go with all my Heart; you ſhall not loſe your Reward.

Third RUFFIAN.

Come then;—and the firſt Town we get to, we'll ſend Word of our Succeſs to their L——ps.

[*Exit Ruffians with Public Spirit.*

SCENE *discovers* AVARICE *and* SUBTILTY.

SUBTILTY.

Well; do our Schemes meet with the Approbation of our Friends?

AVARICE.

Why, you cannot in the leaſt doubt that, eſpecially as they are entirely excluded from 'em.

SUBTILTY.

Ay, from the Inconveniences of 'em; for you know it wou'd be a hard Caſe that the N——y ſhou'd ſuffer. No, no; 'tis the Raſcality we wou'd endeavour to bring under.

AVARICE.

AVARICE.

To be ſure; why you know 'tis the common People who enjoy thoſe Benefits for the moſt Part, and therefore they ought to pay for 'em; nothing more than reaſonable.

SUBTILTY.

Why you ſay right.—Is there any of the Nobility who enjoy their Healths, or get Children as the Commonality do?—Therefore 'tis reaſonable the better Sort ſhould be exempted from ſuch Amercements.

To them enters a Servant with a Letter.

SERVANT.

A Perſon who deſires an Anſwer is in waiting.

Opening the Letter and reads.

AVARICE.

AVARICE, *opening the Letter, and reads.*

WE have ſucceeded in our Point, and have got the Villain PUBLIC SPIRIT *in our Cuſtody; we deſire you would ſend a Party of Guards, that we may bring him in Triumph thro' the City.*

Your dutiful Servants,

CRAFT,
MURDER, and
INTEREST.

AVARICE.

Bid him come up——,

SCENE

SCENE *the Cottage.*

CONTENT.

I wonder what is become of the Gentleman;—he went to the Grove, as uſual, to ſpend an Hour or ſo in Reading.—Diſpatch HONESTY in Search of him; perhaps he has met with ſome Miſchance.

[*Exit* HONESTY.

PRUDENCE.

'Tis now almoſt Evening;—I wonder he has not been here;—he never ſtays ſo long away.

Enter ANCIENT COURAGE.

ANCIENT COURAGE.

Good Even to you.—How does my Friend?

CONTENT.

CONTENT.

He went hence after Dinner with his Book, and has not been ſeen ſince;—but we have ſent in Search of him.

Re-enter HONESTY.

HONESTY.

Well, Maſter, I have ſearched every where, and cannot find him;—I met with *Goodman Labour*, who informed me that he was juſt come from *London*, and met three Ruffians upon the Road, dragging a goodly Sort of a Man along with them;—they ſaid he was a Traitor.—Pray Heaven it be not our Gentleman!

ANCIENT COURAGE.

Indeed I fear too much;—though he was not a Traitor, but had his Country's Good too much at Heart.—But alas! when

when Villainy assumes the Height of Power,—the brave and good are Victims of their Rage.

SCENE *changes to a Priſon, and diſcovers* PUBLIC SPIRIT *in a diſconſolate Poſition.*

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

At length theſe Chains are the Rewards of all my Tenderneſs and Zeal for my Country.—This Priſon, the Habitation of one whoſe Toils for many Years have been for the Freedom of my Fellow Subjects.—Ah! who would break the Reins of balmy Slumber, that hold the Eye-lids down to ſoft Repoſe, to Eaſe and Peace, to meet at laſt with ſuch a Fate as mine?—How often have I baffled the drowſy Deity, and revolved in my

Mind the Means of Security and Happineſs for an ungrateful People?—and ſhall I be made a public Mark for thoſe to point at, whoſe Welfare I have ſo long ſought after?—Ah! no; this Dagger inſtructs me better.

[*Stabs himſelf.*]

Now Villainy may do its worſt;—and Power has none o'er me.

[*Dies.*

Enter AVARICE *and* SUBTILTY.

AVARICE.

Thanks to Fortune, he has ſaved us the Trouble of an Execution.—He's dead, and by his own Hand.

SUBTILTY.

The better for us: His Tears in public might have occaſioned Diſcontent and Murmurings among the People.

AVARICE.

AVARICE.

Now we may go forward in our Schemes without Oppoſition;—and as he's gone, we may begin to put the Fetters of Oppreſſion on the People.

Come then, my Friend, your Country's
Fate purſue;
For what's the Nation's Good to me or
you?

FINIS.

AVARICE.

Now we may go forward in our
Business without Opposition;—and as
that's gone, we may begin to put the Pic-
ture of Opulence on the People.

Come then, my Friend, your Country's
Love
Do call's the Nation's Good to me or
you?

FINIS.